

*Amendment*

*In the Claims:*

NE  
Please amend the claims as follows.

In claim 47, line 2, delete both occurrences of "enchanced" and insert --enhanced-- therefor each time.

In claim 70, line 1, delete "enchanced" and insert therefor --enhanced--.

In claim 71, line 1, delete "enchanced" and insert therefor --enhanced--.

Please rewrite claims 45 and 46 as follows.

45 (Twice amended) A method for enhancing the transformation ability and the viability of a bacterium, said method comprising increasing the fatty acid content of the membrane of said bacterium, wherein said bacterium, after increasing its fatty acid content, exhibits an enhanced transformation ability and enhanced viability after storage at a temperature of from about +4°C to about -80°C, relative to the transformation ability and viability exhibited by said bacterium prior to increasing its fatty acid content, wherein said increasing the fatty acid content is not accomplished by growing said bacterium at a reduced temperature, relative to the temperature at which a bacterium is grown in which the fatty acid content is not increased.